



Testimony of Kelt Wilska, Energy Justice Manager, Maine Conservation Voters
Before the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee

In Support of LD 3

*An Act to Establish the Winter Energy Relief Payment Program to Aid Residents with High Heating Costs
and to Finalize the COVID Pandemic Relief Payment Program*

December 21, 2022

Good afternoon Senator Jackson, Speaker Talbot Ross, and honorable members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee. My name is Kelt Wilska and I am the Energy Justice Manager at Maine Conservation Voters, a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting Maine's environment, democracy, and climate future. LD 3 aligns strongly with our commitment to fostering equitable public policy that protects Maine's most vulnerable. We are proud to support this bill and we urge you to do so as well.

Maine is facing a heating crisis, with energy prices ballooning as a result of global supply disruptions from the Russian invasion of Ukraine. At a time of simultaneously rising inflation, scarce housing, and a waning state pandemic assistance program, Mainers with low income face a terrible choice of whether to put food on their families' tables or keep their homes warm.

At the root of this issue is our global dependence on dirty fossil fuels, which not only pollute our atmosphere with carbon emissions and are a leading contributor to climate change, but also are subject to the whims of global markets as a function of their limited supply. When Mainers struggle this winter to afford oil and natural gas to heat their homes, it will be because of this global reliance on fossil fuels.

We applaud Governor Mills' efforts to send direct checks and provide other funding mechanisms to alleviate the economic pain caused by oil and gas dependence, and we applaud her administration's continued leadership over the past four years in guiding Maine towards a prosperous clean energy future. By heavily incentivizing the adoption of electric heat pumps and directing the procurement of solar and wind energy, the Mills Administration and the Maine Legislature have begun charting a path towards long-term price stability and a future in which Mainers heat their homes with renewable, affordable, and reliable electricity.

Maine is well on its way to reducing its fossil fuel dependence for heating, but we still have a way to go. Please support LD 3 because it protects Maine's most vulnerable and alleviates economic pressures caused by volatile oil and gas prices. Maine is steadily and surely transitioning to a clean energy future by harnessing the power of the sun and the wind, at an affordable price. In the meantime, this legislation is necessary to help low-income Mainers afford to heat their homes this winter.

For these reasons, Maine Conservation Voters urges you to support LD 3. Thank you for your time.